



# DISTRICT 8 UPDATE

## Councilmember Clair Muller

Dear Neighbors:

We're already well into 2006 but I want to start by wishing you all a healthy and prosperous New Year! This is also the beginning of a new four-year term and I am excited to once again serve as your representative on the Atlanta City Council.

During 2005, the City Council accomplished several important items that I was involved with:

- Changed the fiscal year to July/June to enable more sensible budgeting based upon actual prior year revenues and expenses. Completed the Nancy Creek Tunnel project, which is a part of the Clean Water Atlanta Plan that I have advocated for 14 years.
- Shepherded legislation to redefine and more equitably apportion the billing for water and sewer users in condominium and apartment buildings serviced by one meter.
- Passage of the TAD (Tax Allocation District) to enable the construction of the Beltline

This year will be an interesting one as we begin to mold the plans for the next four years of this administration and this City Council. During 2006, I am again chairing the Transportation Committee and will continue to serve on City Utilities Committee and Executive/Finance Committee. I have also been reappointed to serve on the Atlanta Regional Commission, where my focus will be is on transportation and environmental issues.

The Transportation Committee will be dealing with lots of issues this year but some of the major ones will be:

- Beltline development
- Peachtree Streetcar proposal
- Multimodal Passenger Facility
- MARTA funding
- Transit Planning Board, created by ARC to plan regionally
- Congestion Mitigation (through the ARC planning process)
- Airport Construction Projects -Fifth Runway, CONRAC (Consolidated Car Rental Facility)

I hope to provide this District 8 Update on a regular basis, to keep you better informed on neighborhood and city-wide issues. Thank you for your vote of confidence as we go forward in another four year term!

Sincerely,  
Clair Muller



## HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS YEAR'S CITY BUDGET

On December 5, 2005, the City Council adopted the 2006-2007 recommended City Budget. The approved Budget includes some significant changes in the City's budget process and reflects fiscal priorities that aim to preserve a balanced budget while strengthening the resources available. Most importantly, the 2006-2007 Budget was passed without any increase in property taxes! The following are some of the highlights of the approved 2006-2007 budget:

- Beginning January 1, 2006, the City will abandon the January through December fiscal year calendar. The City of Atlanta will follow a July-June fiscal year calendar similar to the calendars of other major local, state and federal agencies. (I first proposed this change seven years ago and am pleased to see it become reality.) The City Council approved two budgets to facilitate this transition: the Interim Budget covers January through June 2006, and the regular fiscal year budget covers July 2006 through June 2007.
- The addition of forty new civilian positions within the Police Department which will release forty sworn officers from administrative duties to resume active policing duties. In addition, nineteen new positions for new sworn officers were approved.
- Creation of a Transportation Planning office within the Planning Department to facilitate the development of an effective regional transportation system.
- Creation of a division within the Planning Department to build and maintain an accurate and complete database of city maps for use by all city agencies.
- Addition of ten new code enforcement officers within the Planning Department to decrease the current case backlog.

### Park Improvements:

I am happy to report that \$105 million was appropriated in the Budget for Atlanta's parks and recreation centers—all of which are in need of upgrading and refurbishing. Forty million was set aside to renovate Atlanta's existing parks and to renovate over twenty recreation centers, refurbish every outdoor pool in the city, rehabilitate ball fields and improve playgrounds. Thirty five million was set aside to acquire more parkland and greenspace along the beltline. Thirty million will be set aside to build new recreation facilities on the newly acquired land. This park funding was possible because the administration was able to see that a park assessment fee was raising much more money than expected - enough to leverage the \$105 million investment in park and greenspace bonds. Bond funds will also pay for new lighting, developed in conjunction with the Atlanta Police Department, to improve safety in our parks. In the next three years, we will see a marked improvement in parks throughout Atlanta. Improved parks are a visible and tangible benefit that we will all enjoy.

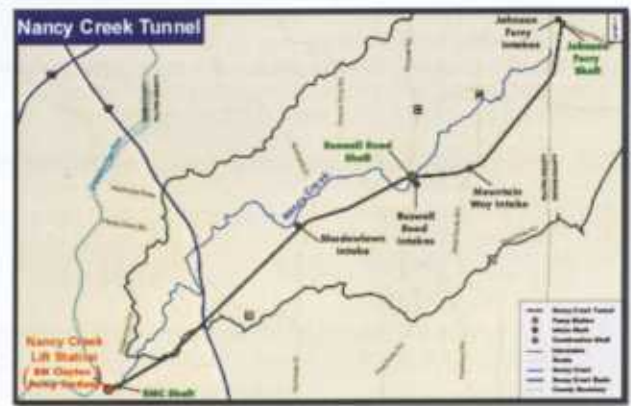


## NANCY CREEK TUNNEL UPDATE

The Nancy Creek Tunnel is a just-completed relief sewer for the old Nancy Creek Sewer which has been at capacity for two decades. It was designed to help eliminate sanitary sewer overflows which were occurring because of the bad condition of the old sewer system and the lack of capacity. The tunnel is 100 to 300 feet underground and is 8 miles long and 16 feet in diameter. While sewer easements were required just as with the older shallow sewers, the tunnel is so deep that property owners are still able to build pools, patios, home extensions, etc. over these easements. It is accessed for maintenance by several shafts, so the property owner who holds such an easement never has the inconvenience of the City having to come onto their property. Maybe this is why the City of Atlanta had several homeowners DONATE their easements! A problem was solved (no more sewer backups into basements or yards in the areas served) and the easements are not as inconvenient as the old traditional easements.

The Nancy Creek Tunnel extends from DeKalb County to the RM Clayton Wastewater Treatment Plant on Bolton Road. It serves the Nancy Creek Basin, which is part of DeKalb, Atlanta and Fulton counties. The tunnel project was contracted for \$31 million and the pump station for \$31 million, but the final cost for the two projects is estimated to be about \$3 million under budget. Most of the overflow problems in this basin should be corrected.

Incidentally, the tunnel concept is a technology that I have championed for years. At one point, the City had a plan in place to connect RM Clayton and Utoy Creek sewer treatment plants. I was a proponent of this plan, as I felt it was the best way to quickly, effectively and cost-efficiently solve some of our infrastructure problems. However, because of mis-information and misleading information from tunnel opponents, and just plain "politics", the tunnel plan was de-railed. I still believe today that we could have avoided years of delay in sewer improvements and millions of dollars that the Consent Decrees will cost, if we had moved forward with that tunnel plan some 10 years earlier.



## MUNICIPALIZATION

Here's a word I invented a few years ago! Atlanta residents do not get much service from the taxes they pay to Fulton County. In fact, the duplicative services between city and county are really hurting the taxpayer! Atlanta residents pay approximately 50% of their property taxes to Atlanta Public Schools, 30% to Fulton County and 20% to the City of Atlanta. Sandy Springs has become a city, and I supported the legislation that would insure that Atlanta was not hurt financially by that incorporation. Now, it looks like other areas may incorporate. Perhaps the MUNICIPALIZATION of Fulton County is happening!

## INFILL MORATORIUM LEGISLATION

For your information, the City Council adverse legislation that would place a "potential moratorium on building in certain in town neighborhoods for a period of 120 days" by a vote of 11 to 3 at their February 6th meeting. I voted to adverse because I believe treating some neighborhoods differently from others is neither fair nor constitutional and that the issue needs a more comprehensive approach.

Infill housing is a topic of much discussion lately, and I am very familiar with this issue as I authored the re-write of the Land Subdivision Ordinance (LSO) 15 years ago and the issue of infill housing was widely debated during this process. The group I convened consisted of homebuilders and neighborhood protectors and they worked on the LSO re-write for over two years. The resulting legislation was unanimously approved by City Council in 1992.

Some of the issues discussed by the working group back then—such as flooding imposed on existing houses when drainage next door changes, or such as concerns about new homes built on newly subdivided land sometimes towering over existing homes - are still being debated today. While much was improved by the new LSO, always more work needs to be done to try to solve some of these unresolved issues.

I am committed to working on development issues as our city continues to grow and the need for in town housing increases.



## WHAT'S THE "BUZZ" ABOUT THE BELTLINE!

I'm pleased to announce that the proposed Atlanta Beltline has passed its final legislative hurdle. On November 7th, 2005, our Atlanta City Council voted 12-3 to approve the creation of a Tax Allocation District (TAD) to fund this project. A TAD (sometimes called a TIF—Tax Increment Financing) provides that any additional taxes collected after redevelopment in a certain district for 20 – 30 years would be spent for improved infrastructure in that district.

Additionally, the Atlanta School Board voted unanimously in favor of the Beltline TAD at their December 12th meeting. And, passing its final legislative hurdle, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners voted to approve the Beltline TAD at their meeting on December 21st.

The TAD will leverage future property tax revenue from around the Beltline to fund Phase I of the project. Phase I includes the creation of over 1,000 acres of new Beltline parks, as well as 33 miles of multi-use trails. These trails will tie together 46 neighborhoods, roughly stretching from Peachtree Hills in the north, down to Peoplestown and Hightown in the south, and then curve back up to Loring Heights and Collier Hills in the north where it will make a significant cut eastward running alongside Ardmore Park. The trails will also link the new parks to over 1,000 acres of existing parks, creating an "emerald necklace" of parks and greenspace circling the heart of Atlanta. After the trails are completed, the City can begin work on Phase II of the Beltline project, which would include the implementation of a light rail transit on primarily existing rail line. I believe that the transit element is an extremely important element of the project. However, because the estimated cost is \$500 million to \$1.2 billion, this phase could take another 10 to 15 years to come to fruition. To learn more about the Beltline, visit <<http://www.beltlinepartnership.org>>.



## BELTLINE ALREADY "ON THE MOVE".....

The City of Atlanta and the Beltline Partnership announced on January 10, 2006 that the City has plans to acquire the active Bellwood Quarry on the Westside of Atlanta as an early and major acquisition along the Beltline. Beltline Tax Allocation District (TAD) funds will be used to convert the quarry into Atlanta's newest and largest park. This new park will add 351 acres of greenspace to Atlanta and will surround a 50-acre reservoir, which will provide drinking water for the city of Atlanta. Without TAD funding, conversion of this quarry into a park and water resource would never have become a reality.



As an aside, opponents of the Mayor's "Clean Water Atlanta"—the plan put in place as a result of the Consent Decrees to repair/replace the City's aging infrastructure and that I advocated for over a decade—wanted to convert this precious asset into a stormwater/sewage retention site. Now, this spectacular quarry and surrounding area will provide great parkland opportunities for residents of Atlanta and will also have a beneficial effect on wildlife habitats and Atlanta's environment. And, most importantly, it will be adding a much needed drinking water resource for Atlanta's growing population.



## I WANT YOUR INPUT!

Your input is vital in helping me be more responsive to your needs, and contact information (name, address, phone number and e-mail address) will enable me to communicate with you on a regular basis. Please e-mail me at [cmuller@atlantaga.gov](mailto:cmuller@atlantaga.gov) concerning any of the following:

1. A service problem you might have.
2. Feedback on the City's overall service delivery.
3. Feedback on major subject areas that I have had town hall meeting on, such as sewer/water issues, traffic and transportation concerns, Quality of Life projects, taxes, etc.
4. Subjects you would like to have a town hall meeting on.
5. Subjects you would like me to address in these newsletters.

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Clair Muller 404/330-6051

Carolyn Fountain

Katie Howard

Clair's fax number 404/658-6564

All Councilmembers 404/330-6030

Mayor 404/330-6100

City Hall Information 404/330-6000

Constituent Services 404/330-6026

Fire Department (Admin.) 404/853-7000

EMERGENCY 911

Non-emergency:

Fire Station 23 404/609-8046

1545 Howell Mill Rd.

Fire Station 26 404/609-8041

2970 Howell Mill Rd.

Fire Station 27 404/848-1769

4260 Northside Dr.

Highways & Streets 404/330-6245

Housing Code Enforce. 404/330-6190

Parks & Recreation 404/817-6788

Planning & Dev. 404/330-6070

Planning 404/330-6145

Zoning 404/330-6150

Zoning Enforcement 404/330-6175

Police Services 404/817-6900

Zone 2 Police 404/848-7231

Zone 2 Commander Major James Sellers

Public Works 404/330-6240

Sanitary Services 404/330-6250

Sewers 404/624-0751

Traffic & Transportation 404/330-6501

Watershed 404/330-6081

24 hour Emergency for 404/624-0751

Water/Sewer

**Visit my webpage on the City's website at: [www.atlantaga.gov](http://www.atlantaga.gov)**